

SENATE BILL REPORT

E2SSB 6731

As Passed Senate, February 11, 2000

Title: An act relating to Lake Whatcom.

Brief Description: Creating a Lake Whatcom landscape plan.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Spanel and Gardner).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation: 2/2/2000 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/8/2000 [DP2S].
Passed Senate, 2/11/2000, 45-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6731 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; T. Sheldon, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Morton, Oke, Rossi, Snyder, Spanel and Stevens.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6731 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Chair; Bauer, Vice Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Fairley, Fraser, Honeyford, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Long, Rasmussen, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Winsley, and Wojahn.

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: Some municipal watersheds are owned by the municipalities, but in most cases the ownership is mixed between public and private lands. In the case of the Whatcom County watershed which serves the city of Bellingham, the land includes private land and land managed by the Department of Natural Resources. The Legislature asked that a Lake Whatcom watershed study be done during 1999 and that the Department of Natural Resources and the committee formed by the 1999 law report back in the year 2000 to assess the costs and values related to protection of the watershed.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Natural Resources must develop a landscape management plan for state-owned forest land in the Lake Whatcom watershed area. The department must consult with other major forest landowners and watershed residents in developing the

plan. The plan must establish riparian management zones along all streams. The department must manage the lands within such zones to protect water quality and riparian habitat.

Harvest and road construction on unstable slopes within the watershed must be carefully regulated. The department must create and implement a sustained yield model specific to Lake Whatcom consistent with the statewide model. The management plan must be completed and implemented by June 30, 2001. Timber harvest and road construction within the watershed must be delayed until the plan is completed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): The landslide problems and timber harvest effects on water quality and on public safety need to be addressed. Lake Whatcom provides water for 66,000 people in Bellingham and the water quality must be protected.

Testimony Against (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): None.

Testified (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): PRO: Representative Ericksen; David Jennings, WSDOH, Chair of Advisory Committee; Jamie Berg, Alan Soicher, David Hunter, Linda Harrom, Whatcom County Panel; Jodi Broughton; David M. Schmalz, President, North Cascades Audubon Society; Didi Little, City of Bellingham; Debbie Craig; G. Dewey Huston; Lisa McShane; Jennifer Hooper; Amber Johnson; Ron Shultz, Audubon; Erin Moore; Lois Garlick, Clean Water Alliance.

Testimony For (Ways & Means): Development of the management plan has been a positive process that is effectively addressing local concerns. This bill will ensure the management plan is implemented.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): None.

Testified (Ways & Means): PRO: Kaleen Cottingham, Department of Natural Resources; Ron Shultz, Audubon.

House Amendment(s): Road construction and timber harvest on potentially unstable slopes will be carefully regulated. On unstable slopes new road construction is prohibited and old road reconstruction is to be limited.